

# Great Strides Closes 21st Season

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Sanford Vermillion kicked off spring with its 21st annual Great Strides wellness program.

Participants break down into teams and are put into one of four categories: senior, recreational, intermediate, and power pushers. The teams then tracked their miles of physical activity from March 30-May 10.

"It started as a community involvement challenge," said program organizer Jill Christopherson. "This year was our highest participation. They log their miles for seven days and take team miles at the end of each week."

Fifty-two teams with 233 participants competed in this year's event and totaled 7,165.56 miles over the six-week period.

"Any kind of physical activity," said participant Mary Edelen. "You can run, you can walk, you can bike, you can garden. They have a little formula for how many miles you can put down

for what kind of activity you're doing. Like for instance, if you're out for a bike ride, you get x-number of miles for how many miles you go on a bike. And if you're gardening, it's the physical exercise. You have to do x-number of minutes of gardening in order to do a mile."

Edelen, 70, is on a team of her own called "Here's to Health" and stuck to her activity of choice, running.

"Running is a life-long sport. You can do it anytime and anywhere," she said.

Edelen ran 150 miles for the program, the minimum number of miles a team has to reach, and she keeps track of her running with a Garmin watch.

"(The watch) is off of satellite. When I start off on a run, I just set my watch," She said. "I put it up to the satellite and it starts going. It tracks how far I'm going."

Most of the time, Edelen runs a 1.6 mile course that she has mapped out around her neighborhood.

"It's self-motivation. I've got a goal in mind, this is what I want to do, this

is what I want to accomplish. Since I've been running for so long I just know what I have to do to get there," she said.

The event is put on each year by Sanford Vermillion "for community members to establish or continue healthy lifestyle choices" and celebrated the end of the competition with a party at the University of South Dakota Wellness Center.

"The thing that's kind of awesome is there are businesses in town that entered teams," Christopherson said. "It's fun to have those teams within the businesses."

There are no restrictions for participation in Great Strides and Christopherson said the oldest participant was in his 90's.

"It gets us all going in the spring time," Edelen said. "After the winter it says to all of us to get out there and get moving whether it's indoors or outdoors. Physical activity is just wonderful. It's wonderful for any age group."

# USD Program Working To Increase Local Butterfly Population With Garden

BY SONIA HERNANDEZ  
For The Plain Talk

The monarch butterfly population has been dramatically declining in recent years.

Students of the University of South Dakota's Sustainability Program have collaborated with the USD Facilities Management and the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks to plant butterfly gardens on the USD campus and Spirit Mound State Park.

Students planted the garden last Friday, and worked with Sustainability Professor Meghan Jarchow of USD to help benefit pollinators. The group has planted several

thousand prairie seedlings native to South Dakota including milkweed species and other species.

One of the main goals is to educate students and members of the community on the importance of preserving these habitats. The loss of milkweed and degradation of the native prairie habitat has become a main threat to monarch butterflies.

The goal is that these gardens will provide essential food and habitat to pollinators and monarchs native to South Dakota. The sites will enable visitors to participate in citizen science through Monarch Watch.



COURTESY PHOTO

# USD Students From Nepal Reaching Out To Community

BY JANELLE CARLSON  
For The Plain Talk

"Even a dollar can help" So says Keshav Bhattari, one of USD's eight Nepalese graduate students who began a massive fundraising campaign after the first earthquake struck Nepal on April 25.

The immediate aftermath of the earthquake left the students desperate for news of their families and friends in Nepal.

"I felt so helpless" says Jayandra Chiluwad, recalling the desperation and terror that gripped the students as they tried unsuccessfully to reach their families.

"I called for three hours until I could get ahold of my family" recounts Bikash KC.

Thankfully, the students were spared the grief many other Nepalese face. Their families and homes were spared being located away from the earthquake's epicenter. They were among the lucky ones as there have been at least 8,125 people killed and more than

215,000 injured in the three major earthquakes that have rocked Nepal since April 25.

Yet even in their home towns the situation is bad.

According to the students, the people no longer trust the Nepal government to alert them of potential disasters after the second major earthquake hit Nepal without warning on May 12. Instead, the students say, many families have taken to sleeping outside as a precautionary measure against yet more loss of life.

Nepal has garnered much support from abroad, with neighboring countries India and China, at this point, being the biggest help. However, other countries have stepped up to the plate, as well. Notable among these are Israel, who has provided Nepal with much needed psychosocial care to those who have lost everything and the United States which donated \$9 million in disaster relief funds. Yet, much more is needed.

Nepal's government said

that it would take \$7 billion to rebuild Nepal and care for the 9 million people that have been internally displaced – and that was before the second and third major earthquakes, causing many relief agencies to leave.

Another issue, monsoon season is approaching, typically beginning in 4 to 5 weeks.

The students say the need for help is dire, particularly in Sindhupalchowk District which was completely devastated by the first earthquake.

Meanwhile, in Vermillion, the USD Nepalese students work to make a difference for their country. They have been fundraising everywhere.

During finals week they, or their friends at the International Student Club could be seen at the Ubrew, HyVee, or tabling in the MUCC. With the help of Patrick Morrison of CAGE, fliers were created and bake sales held.

"Every dollar can help" said Keshav Bhattari,

explaining how every dollar raised here means two meals in Nepal.

Vermillion residents have been able to make a small difference for the students' as they have raised more than \$2,000 or 4,000 meals for those worst affected by the earthquakes. The money has been earmarked for the Red Cross, but the students hope the Red Cross will be able to give some of their money to the local groups that have been most successful helping the survivors.

"We want to go home", the students agree, "but we have to finish our studies. Anyway the government suggests not returning home when you are emotional."

Asked what else could be done to help Nepal, Bikash KC said, "My country is still beautiful. If you really want to help Nepal, go visit it."

Donations for the country of Nepal can be made at the Red Cross's website <https://www.redcross.org>.

## Class

From Page 1

reasons that make her feel as though the class of 2015 is, "the best class Vermillion has ever seen." Her first reason was, "we are all extremely good looking." After a hearty chuckle the mood shifted from light hearted to heartfelt.

Kirsch went on to say, "We are really good at making others feel welcome."

This came with a moving story about her coming to Vermillion four years ago as a high school freshman.

Trying very hard to keep her composure, Kirsch ended her speech by saying, "Don't be afraid to follow your dreams...Go out there and make the impossible possible, you guys."

The last Class Comment speaker was Regan Bye, an Honors Program graduate who left his classmates with a list of reasons why it is great being a part of the

class of 2015.

"Reason number ten. We have friends going all around the country to pursue their dreams...Reason number five. We're some of the few people in the world who actually know what a Tanager is...Reason number four. We're obviously a very intelligent group, since we can't pick just one valedictorian...Reason number two. Our class is full of great leaders...and reason number one why it's great to be a part of the class of 2015 is Travis Weber, everybody."

Bye's entertaining and specific speech to his fellow graduates was met with thunderous laughter and applause.

As is typical of all graduations, there is always an invited speaker of great esteem that comes to share a bit of wisdom, a secret to success, or some advice that might inspire the graduates to feel even more proud on their special day.

At the Vermillion High School graduation this

speaker was Dr. Christina Keller, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences at The University of South Dakota and Professor of Physics and Astronomy. During Dr. Keller's speech, she summed up a list of what she believes to be the secrets to success in adult life.

"1. Show up. You may not know what you'll miss unless you do...2. Accept responsibility, or as I like to call it 'take care of your business.'...and 3. Respect others. You don't have to like them; you don't have to hang out with them, but you have to respect them."

She recognized that her advice might seem like common sense, but she mentioned being consistently surprised at students who fail to live up to their potential for failing to follow these simple guidelines for life.

After the Presentation of

Diplomas by Mrs. Chris Esping, School Board President, the closing remarks were given by Jessica Brady, the senior class Vice President.

"When I began collecting ideas for this speech, I began to think of lessons. Lesson you and I have all learned...many of you said, 'always be yourself.'"

Brady went on to challenge her class as they face their imminent graduation.

"...in our adult lives there are times for us to be selfish, but don't take those times for granted...my second challenge is to keep moving forward...ask 'why not?' don't let the 'whys' keep you from doing amazing things."

On a warm and inspirational note, the class of 2015 moved their tassels from right to left in a symbolic gesture of graduation.

Congratulations Vermillion High School Class of 2015!

90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration  
Betty Jean Knutson  
Open House  
Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>  
3:00 - 5:00 P.M.  
Bergen Lutheran Church, Timber Road

## UCHS To Celebrate Memorial Day

On May 25 the Union County Historical Society will host a Memorial Day celebration at the Union County Museum located at 707 W. Main St. in Elk Point, SD.

The main feature will be the South Dakota's Fallen Hero's traveling display.

A patriotic program will begin at noon with Joy Hemmingson as vocalist followed by a Civil War presentation by Phillip Peterson.

The museum will be open during this event from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. A free will offering meal will be served from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. consisting of taverns, beans, chips, rhubarb crisp, cookies and a drink.

Please be sure to attend this event as there are now many items have been added to the museums displays inside the main house and in the north display barn.

Due to limited parking, please park at the Immanuel Lutheran Church parking lot, just east of the museum, and you will be transported to the museum grounds. Those with disabilities will be allowed to park near the museum.

## Construction To Begin At Sanford

The Emergency Room entrance at Sanford Medical Center Vermillion (17 Walker St.) will be closing due to the start of construction on the east side of the medical center campus. Once new directional signage is placed on Tuesday, May 19, all patients, visitors and vendors will be instructed to enter the medical center through the main entrance at 20 S Plum St.

All community members are asked to pay close attention to new directional signs posted for parking and the temporary entrance location. During this construction period, we ask that everyone observe our hospital visiting hours of 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Entry to Sanford Clinic Vermillion and parking has not changed.

During phase one of construction at Sanford Vermillion, new facilities are being added, including new pharmacy and laundry departments and the addition of an ambulance garage at the Emergency Room entrance.

## Child Care Directory To Be Published

The Child Care Directory published each year by the Clay County Extension Office is currently being updated.

If you are currently providing home or center child care services and would like to be included in this annual directory, please contact Colleen at the Clay County Extension Office by calling 605-677-7111 or emailing clay.county@sdstate.edu. Listings will be accepted until June 1, 2015. The directory will be available to the public by mid-June.

## Foster Care Donations Sought

Every day, 1600 kids enter foster care in the United States. When most children enter foster care, they receive two trash bags to store and transport their belongings. They deserve more!

A group of Irene citizens wants to help. We will be working through the "Together We Rise" project to provide duffel bags to all children entering foster care in our area. A simple duffel bag with a few personal items inside. It may not seem like much to some people, however to a young child whose life is going through turmoil and change, this duffel bag is a gift. A gift that shows that someone cares. A gift that they can keep and call their own.

Planning for future fundraising events has begun, and we hope to provide our "Sweet Cases" to the local Department of Social Services offices in Yankton, Clay & Turner counties soon. The DSS office will assist us in delivering the "Sweet Cases" to children entering foster care. Please visit our facebook page for upcoming event details. <http://www.facebook.com/SweetCasesIrene>

## Swan Lake Marathon To Be Run

Swan Lake Christian Camp of Viborg, SD is hosting a marathon (26.2 miles,) ½ marathon (13.1 miles), and a 5.3 Mile run on June 14th, 2015. Runners, joggers, walkers and spectators are welcome. Money raised will go towards camper scholarships. Come have a good time and enable more kids to come to camp. For more information check out the website at [www.myslcc.com](http://www.myslcc.com). email [marathon@myslcc.com](mailto:marathon@myslcc.com) or call the camp at 605-326-5690.

## Stone Named VSD Teacher Of Year

Mrs. Stone is truly an outstanding educator. During her tenure at Vermillion High School Mrs. Stone has been professional, competent, punctual, enthusiastic, organized, personable, caring, passionate, and has an excellent knowledge base in her professional field of study.

Mrs. Stone always challenges her students to perform at their highest level. She incorporates enrichment activities as well as modifications to meet the needs of all her students. Mrs. Stone is a visionary and is not hesitant to incorporate new teaching strategies to enhance her curriculum. Mrs. Stone is very passionate about her students.

It is important to Mrs. Stone that her students gain the social skills they need to be successful in the community.

Mrs. Stone takes numerous time outside of her contractual duties to have outings for her students. It is not unusual to see Mrs. Stone and her students eating pizza at Little Italy's on a Friday night. Her integrity and moral character have gained her the respect of her teaching peers and administrators at Vermillion High School.

Thank you Kelly for all you do for Vermillion School District.



Stone

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